the Rural Development Ministry has attracted sharp criticism from environmentalists;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the Prime Minister has received a letter from the environmentalists urging reconsideration of the proposed bifurcation and suggestion restructuring of the NWDB and reorientation of its activities while respecting its linkage with forestry and environment; and

(c) if so, what is the decision/reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) to (c) Some environmentalists addressed a letter to the Prime Minister suggesting that it was desirable to retain the National Wastelands Development Board in the Ministry of Environment & Forests. The issue raised in the letter has been considered and it has been decided not to change the decision to transfer the National Wastelands Development Board from the Ministry of Environment and Forests to the Ministry of Rural Development.

Ridge Facing Extinction

2876. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned 'Ridge is facing extinction' which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated 13th July, 1992;

(b) whether it is a fact that Government's plans to spruce up hectares of forest land are not succeeding and a large number of trees are diminishing; and

(c) if so, the steps Government have taken to save the Aravali ridge from extinction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI KAMAL NATH): Yes, Sir.

(b) Large scale degradation of Delhi Ridge forest area has taken place due to enchoachments, diversion for non-forest purposes and felling of trees.

(c) The entire Delhi Ridge forest area is proposed to be put under the administrative control of single agency preferably the Forest Department of the Delhi Administration to area.

देश में कुल वन क्षेत्र

2877 **श्री शिवचरण सिंह :** क्या पर्यावरण और वन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) रिकार्ड के अनुसार देश में कुल कितना वन क्षेत्र है और वास्तव में कुल कितनी भूमि पर वन हैं ;

(ख) क्या यह सच है कि वनों के विनाश को ध्यान में रखते हुए वन संरक्षण अधिनियम, 1980 अधिनियमित किया गया था और क्या इसका पालन किया जा रहा है, यदि नहीं , तो इसके क्या कारण हैं ?

(ग) उक्त अधिनियम के अधीन विशेष रूप से राजस्थान में इसके अनुपालन के संदर्भ में कितने मामले दायर किए गए और उनका ब्यौरा क्या है ;

(घ) क्या यह सच है कि राजस्थान सरकार ने 1980–88 की अवधि के दौरान इस अधिनियम का उल्लंघन किया है और वन क्षेत्र में पटटे पर खनन कार्य करने की अनुमति दी है ;

(ङ) यदि हां, तो उसका ब्यौरा क्या है ;

(च) क्या सरकार वन संरक्षण अधिनियम, का उल्लंघन करने के लिए जिम्मेदार व्यक्तियों के विरुद्ध कानूनी कार्यवाही करेगी और